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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE RETAIL MARKET

Business Economics and Tourism

2009

ABSTRACT

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Title	Customer satisfaction in the retail market
Year	2009
Language	English
Pages	43
Name of Supervisor	Kari Tikkala

Fashion gives people an opportunity to satisfy many emotional and practical needs. Fashion can be used to communicate with other, develop their own identity and to gain acceptance from other.

This study was conducted in the Gant Stores around metropolitan area in March 2008 and the intention was to find out what customers think about the appearance, products and service of Gant Stores

Gant is a premium life style brand for men and women. Gant is distributed worldwide in 67 countries, through 220 Gant Stores as well as a number of selected premium retailers.

In Finland there are five Gant Stores located in Helsinki, Espoo, Turku and in Lempäälä.

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Opinnäytetyön nimi	Asiakastyytyväisyys jälleenmyynti markkinoilla Case company Gant Store
Vuosi	2009
Kieli	englanti
Sivumäärä	43
Ohjaaja	Kari Tikkala

Muoti antaa ihmisille mahdollisuuden tyydyttää monet tunnepitoiset että käytännölliset tarpeet. Muotia voi käyttää kommunikaation välineenä, kehittää omaa identiteettiä sekä saada hyväksyntää kanssa ihmisiltä.

Tämä tutkimus tehtiin pääkaupunkiseudun Gant Storeissa maaliskuussa 2008. Tutkimuksessa etsittiin vastausta mitä asiakkaat ovat mieltä Gant Storesta, sen ulkoasusta, tuotteista ja palvelusta.

Gant on korkealuokkainen life style-merkki miehille, naisille ja lapsille. Gant on levittäytynyt 67 maahan 220 liikkeellä ja niiden lisäksi merkkiä myy monet jälleenmyyjä.

Suomessa on viisi Gant Storea ja ne sijaitsevat Helsingissä, Espoossa, Turussa ja Lempäälässä.

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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

This study is carried out clothing company Gant Store in Helsinki Area to find out how to improve the business to satisfy customers and gain their loyalty.

The reason why I chose this topic is that I work as a Store Manager at Gant Store Sello and it is very important to find out where the chain stands from the customer's point of view.

Business success in today's competitive markets requires a high understanding and respect of the customer. Customers are demanding, have more money to spend and have a wide collection of goods and services to choose from.

To satisfy our customers, we must be able to listen to their feedback and improve services and goods to keep of clients.

1.1.2 Aim and Problems of the research

The aim of this research is to find out how the Gant Stores in Helsinki area can improve the quality of customer service, the offered selections and general atmosphere at the stores.

The main research problem is that company does not know how its customers evaluate its service, as no customer satisfaction survey has been conducted before.

Therefore the research problem is to find out how people see Gant Stores and the service provides it.

1.1.3 Limitations of the research

The research is restricted to the customers of the Gant Stores in Helsinki area.

1.1.3 Structure of the research

This thesis consists of two sections. The theoretical study section is based on theory of marketing mix, service, service quality, and customer value, customer satisfaction and at the end the basic theory of retail markets and how important it is to satisfy customers in the retail markets.

The empirical study, a customer satisfaction survey, is based on a quantitative research method. It includes research design and an evaluation of the answers, which were given as questionnaires, handed out to the customers of Gant Store.

The reason the theory begins with marketing mix is that marketing mix is an essential tool in increasing selling in a company and three Ps, product, place and process we used in research questionnaire.

Process belongs into a service marketing mix, and in the case where I am an employee I find good service and service quality almost the most important factor 's to increase sales and gain customers loyalty.

Customers are the most important factor to please and a customer satisfaction survey is carried to find out their opinions on Gant Store. Customer value and customer satisfaction theory explain how to create a good relationship with a customers and why it is so essential to find loyal customers and also retain the old ones.

The reason why the study includes a theory of retail business is that Gant Store belongs into a retail business sector, so the aim was to link customer satisfaction to a retail business → How to satisfy customers in retail business?

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

2.1. Marketing mix



2.1.1 Marketing Mix diagram

(Kotler on Marketing, How to create, win and dominate markets, 1999, 96)

Product

The product is the most important aspect of the marketing mix. The product can be a service or even a holiday destination. Products have both tangible and intangible benefits. Tangible benefits include benefits, which can be measured such as the top speed of a car. Intangible benefits are benefits that cannot be

measured such as the enjoyment the customer will get from the product. It is important that the product is changed as necessary to bring it up to date and prevent it from being overtaken by competitor.

Price

It is very important that the correct price is charged for a product. If the price is too high consumers will avoid the product, as they will believe it to be too expensive yet if the product is priced too low they may believe that there is something wrong with the product for it to be so cheap. Also, if the company charges too low a price, it may not cover its costs. (<http://www.projectalevel.co.uk/business/mix.htm>)

Promotion

Once the product has been made and the price set, it is important that potential customers are told about the product. Promotion can also be used for reassuring the consumer that the product is of good quality and persuading them to purchase the product. Promotional methods include: advertising, direct selling, point of sale and incentives. (<http://www.projectalevel.co.uk/business/mix.htm>)

Place

Place decides where the product is to be sold. There are three main distribution channels to choose from:

Traditional - selling the product to wholesalers who will then sell the product on to retail outlets. (<http://www.projectalevel.co.uk/business/mix.htm>)

Modern - producers selling the product directly to the retail outlet.

Direct - the producer selling directly to the consumer such as door-to-door sales or over the Internet (<http://www.projectalevel.co.uk/business/mix.htm>)

2.1.2 Service Marketing Mix

People

An essential ingredient to any service provision is the use of appropriate staff and people. Recruiting the right staff and training them appropriately in the delivery of their service is essential if the organization want to obtain a form of competitive advantage. Consumers make judgments and deliver perceptions of the service based on the employees they interact with. Staff should have the appropriate interpersonal skills, aptitude, and service knowledge to provide the service that consumers are paying for.

(<http://www.learnmarketing.net/servicemarketingmix.htm>)

Creating and delivering product elements to customers to require the design and implementation of effective process. A process is the method and sequence of actions in the service performance.

(www.learnmarketing.net/servicemarketingmix.htm)

Physical Evidence

Physical evidence is the elements of the service mix which allows the consumer again to make a judgment on the organization. It is an essential ingredient of the marketing mix, consumers will make perceptions based on their sight of the

service provisions, which will have an impact on the organizations perceptual plan of the service.

(www.learnmarketing.net/servicemarketingmix.htm)

2.1.3 Service

A service is an act or performance offered by one party to another. Although the process may be tied to a physical product, the performance is transitory, often intangible in nature, and does not normally result in ownership of any of the factors of production.

A service is also an economic activity that creates value and provides benefits for customers at specific times and places by bringing about a desired change in, or on behalf of the recipient of the services. (Grönroos 2007 Service management and marketing, 9)

Most often service involves interactions with some sort of service provider. There are three basic characteristics for most services can be identified:

1. Services are processes consisting of activities or a series of activities rather than things
2. Services are at least to some extent produced and consumed simultaneously
3. The customer participates in the service production process at least to some extent

(Grönroos 2007 Service management and marketing,47)

3. CUSTOMER VALUE

Marketing-orientated companies attempt to create customer value in order to attract and retain customers. Their aim is to deliver superior value to their target customers. In doing so, they implement the marketing concept by meeting and exceeding customer needs better than the competition. (David Jobber, Principles and Practice of Marketing, 1995, 11)

Attracting and retaining customers can be a difficult task. Customers often face a bewildering array of products and services from which to choose. A customer buys from the firm that offers the highest customer perceived value – the customer's evaluation of the difference between all the benefits and all the costs of a marketing offer to those competing offers. (Armstrong/Kotler, Marketing: an introduction, 2005,16)

4. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how an organisation's total product performs in relation to set of customer's expectations.

(Hill, Nigel, Alexander,Jim,The handbook of customer satisfaction and loyalty measurement, 1996,18)

Customer satisfaction depends on the product's perceived performance relative to a buyer's expectations. If the product's performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If performance matches expectations, the customer is satisfied. If performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied and delighted. (Armstrong/Kotler, Marketing: an introduction, 2005,17)

Most of the companies make a huge mistake, when they are not paying enough attention to their customer satisfaction. Keeping customers satisfied is the best

competitive advantage against competitors. Customers are loyal, prepared to pay more and are excellent external marketers.

Here is a list of the reasons for developing long-term relationships with customers:

- Acquiring new customers can cost 5 to 10 times more than the costs involved in satisfying and retaining current customers.
- Loyal customers tend to spend more and cost less to serve
- Satisfied customers are likely to recommend your products and services

Advocates of a company are more likely to pay premium prices to a supplier they know and trust

- Retaining exiting customers prevents competitors from gaining market share
- A 5 percent reduction in the customer defection rate can increase profits by 25 to 85 percent, depending on the industry.

(Sarah Cook, Customer Care 2000, 7)

Exceeding the value offered by competitors is the key to marketing success. Consumers decide upon purchases on the judgements about the values offered by suppliers. Once the product is bought, customer satisfaction depends upon its perceived performance compared to the buyer's expectations. Customer satisfaction occurs when perceived performance matches or exceeds expectations. Expectations are formed through post-buying, experiences, and discussions with other people, and suppliers marketing activities. Companies need to avoid the mistake of setting customer expectations too high through exaggerated promotional claims since this can lead to dissatisfaction if

performance falls short of expectations. (David Jobber, Principles and Practice of Marketing, 1995, 12)

Customer satisfaction research is focused on company's current customers to clear up functionality in proportion to customer's expectations. Amount of - or repeatedly happening purchasing doesn't always tell about customer's satisfaction. Customer may buy product, because there is not better available, or he / she doesn't know any other alternatives. In this kind of case, customer is not committed to a company or a product, but moves over to another alternative as soon as it will be available.

Research measures total customer satisfaction and also divisions of it, e.g. products, price, quality, customer service etc. Most important is that research is reliable, repeated often, results are analysed and problematic points are solved. (Bergström, Leppänen, Yrityksen Asiakasmarkkinointi 2003, 428)

4.1 Importance of measuring customer satisfaction

As I already mentioned in a previous chapter customer satisfaction is one of the most central indicator when measuring and analysing company's success possibility now and in future.

The average business loses 10-30 per cent of its customers each year, but they often don't know which customers they have lost, when they were lost, why they were lost, or how much sales revenue and profit this customer decay has cost them. (Nigel Hill, Handbook of customer satisfaction and Loyalty measurement 1996, 7)

Dissatisfaction is clearly the fundamental reason for customer decay, but what causes customer dissatisfaction?

Hill has created 5 different gaps to explain customer decay:

Gap 1: The promotional gap

Customers might misunderstand company's marketing communications. They might get offended and lose respect and trust for the company

Gap 2: The understanding gap

Understanding gap develops when managers of the organisation do not have an accurate understanding of customer's needs and priorities. If they don't know what's important for the customers, it is extremely difficult to satisfy customer's needs.

Gap 3: The procedural gap

Assuming that the company does have a full understanding of what matters most to the customers it will still fail to deliver customer satisfaction if it has not translated customers' expectations into appropriate operating procedures and systems.

Gap 4: The behavioural gap

Sometimes organisations have clear procedures which are well matched to customers' needs and priorities but do not achieve a consistently high level of customer satisfaction because staff are insufficiently trained or declined to follow the procedures to the letter at all time.

Gap 5: The perception gap

It is possible that gaps 1-4 do not exist, but customers are still dissatisfied. This is because customers' perception of the performance of your organization may differ from reality. Bad experiences from the past might have formed an attitude against the company and repairing this mistake might take a long time. (Nigel Hill, Handbook of customer satisfaction and Loyalty measurement, 1996, 7)

It is obvious that it is really difficult for a company to bind a customer for a long period of time. Even a one mistake might spoil the whole relationship and customer has been lost for a competitor.

The value of one customer's retention is incredibly high. Lifetime value is counted by the average spend with the business, multiplied by the length of the time business will retain the customer. Obviously the most important reason for doing business is that it will increase profitability. Measuring customer satisfaction and acting appropriately on the results, will increase profitability.

Success and retention of the loyal customer will be won by 'doing best what matters most to the customers. (Nigel Hill, Handbook of customer satisfaction and Loyalty measurement, 1996, 7)

4.2 Retaining customers

Totally satisfied customers are more likely to be loyal customers. However the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty varies greatly across industries and competitive situations.(Armstrong Gary, Kotler Philip, Marketing : an introduction 2003,23)

As earlier mentioned, companies are ready to fight hard to retain customers. Competition is increasing and the cost of attracting new customers is rising. It might cost five times as much as attract new customers as to keep current customers happy. The best approach to customer retention is to deliver high customer satisfaction and value that result in strong customer loyalty and well-developed business relationships.(Armstrong Gary, Kotler Philip, Marketing: an introduction 2003,23)

5.RETAILING

5.1 What is retailing?

Retailing encompasses the business activities involved in selling goods and services to consumers for their personal, family, or household use. It includes every sale to the final consumer. Retailing is also the last stage in the distribution process (Barry Berman, Joel R. Evans, Retail Management : a strategic approach 2004,3).

Today the retail trade comprises a wide and varied collection of outlets for goods and services.

In order that retail exchange can take place, the retailer must offer to sell products and services that are valued by customers. Retailers create value for customers by offering the right merchandise, creating a pleasant atmosphere, decreasing shopping risks, increasing shopping convenience and reducing price by controlling costs.(Tony Kent, Ogenyi Omar,retailing 2003,27)

Retailers provide important functions that increase the value of the product and services they sell to consumers and facilitate the distribution of those products and services for the manufacturers to produce them. These value-creating functions include:

1. Providing an assortment of products and service
2. Breaking bulk
3. Holding inventory
4. Providing services

(Levy/Weitz, retailing management 2004,7)

Retailers are the final business supply chain that links manufacturers to consumers. A supply chain is a set of firms that make and deliver a given set of goods and services to the ultimate consumer.

(Levy/Weitz, retailing management 2004,7)

5.2 Retail mix

To implement a retail strategy, management develops a retail mix that satisfies the need of its target market better than of its competitors. The retail mix includes the decision variables retailers use to satisfy customer needs and influence their purchase decisions.

Elements in the retail mix include the types of merchandise and services offered, merchandise pricing, advertising and promotional programs, store design, merchandise display, assistance to customers provided by salespeople, and convenience of the store's locations.

(Kent, Tony, Ogenyj, Omar, Retailing 2003,434)

6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SATISFACTION IN RETAILING

6.1 Customer service in retailing

Every time a customer comes into a contact with a store, its staff or merchandise, they experience a service encounter or 'moment of truth'. Every moment of truth is an opportunity to attract retail or enhance the relationship with the customer. (Kent, Tony, Ogenyj, Omar, Retailing 2003, 434)

Customer service is highly significant element of retailing. It represents one important strategic element, which can differentiate retailers from one other. Customer service impacts the total retail experience. The main aim of customer service is to offer the customer the satisfaction he or she expects from the store as a result of patronizing it. (Kent, Tony, Ogenyj, Omar, Retailing 2003, 433)

6.2 Expected customer service and augmented customer service

Expected customer service is the type of service level that customers want to receive from any retailer, such as basic employee courtesy. Augmented customer service on the other hand is more demanding and includes the activity that enhances the shopping experience and gives retailers a competitive advantage. (Levy, Michael, Weiz, Barton A, Retailing management 2004, 25)

6.3 Customer satisfaction in retailing

Customer satisfaction occurs when the value and customer service provided through a retailing experience meet or exceed consumer expectations. If the expectations of value and customer service are not met, the consumer will be dissatisfied. Only very satisfied customers are likely to remain loyal in the long run. (Levy, Michael, Weiz, Barton A, Retailing management 2004, 2)

Customer satisfaction in a retailing should be a long-term aim and concentrate into an existing customer rather than replace dissatisfied customers with new ones.

It is extremely important to satisfy customers because a retailer's sale comes from two groups of customers: new customers and repeat customers. In retailing, attracting new customers is likely to cost company five times as much as pleasing an existing customer.

Customer retention is more important than customer attraction, and a key to customer retention is customer satisfaction.

A highly satisfied customer:

- Stays longer
- Buys more as the retailer introduces new products and upgrades existing brands
- Talks favorably about the retailer and its merchandise
- Pays less attention to competing brands and advertising and is less sensitive to price
- Offers products/service ideas to the retailer
- Costs less to serve than new customers

(Kotler, Philip, Marketing insights from A to Z, 2003, 42)

Based on these criteria, it is important that the retailer measures customer satisfaction regularly. (Kotler, Philip, Marketing insights from A to Z, 2003, 42)

Tony Kent has listed the factors that affect customer satisfaction:

- Products - the quality, value and methods of marketing
- Premises - the environment created for the customers
- Procedures – the systems required to do business
- People – The force that makes it happens

(Levy, Michael, Weiz, Barton A 2004 Retailing management,440)

Retailers need to spend more time learning who their customers are. They should give their customers a club card and capture information in their databases. By analyzing these they will know their customer better

Retailers must invest in making retailing an experience rather than a chore. Brand experience counts for much more than brand image.

Retailers must move more aggressively into a private branding. Private brands make more money for retailers than national brands.

Retailer should open up a web site and offer customer more information and opportunity for contact and dialogue.

(Philip Kotler, Marketing insights from A to Z 2005,156)

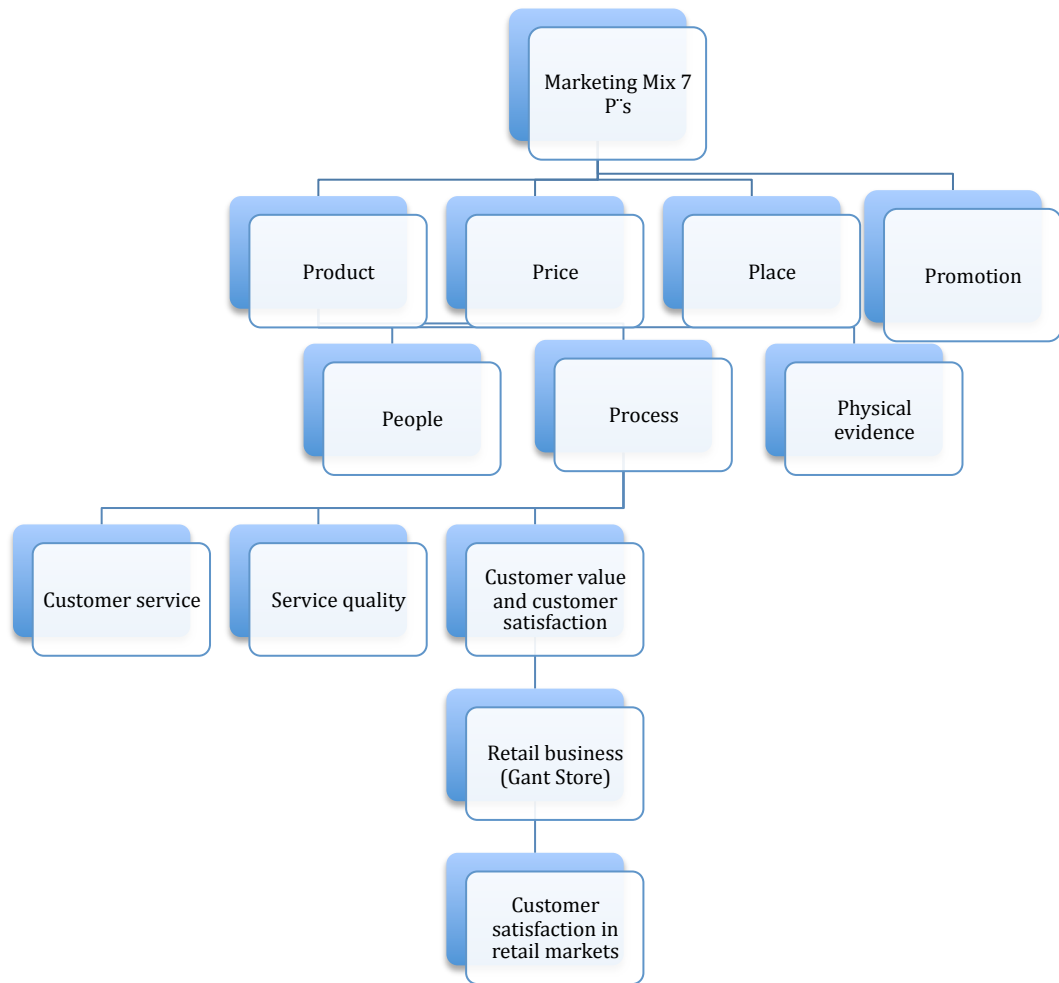


Figure 6.1 the structure of the theory diagram

In this diagram it is easy to see the structure of the theory. Theory starts from the basic service marketing mix and connects from process to customer service, service quality, service value and then to the most important; the basics of the customer satisfaction. From the theory of service and customer satisfaction there will be theory of retailing and as a closure customer satisfaction in retail markets.

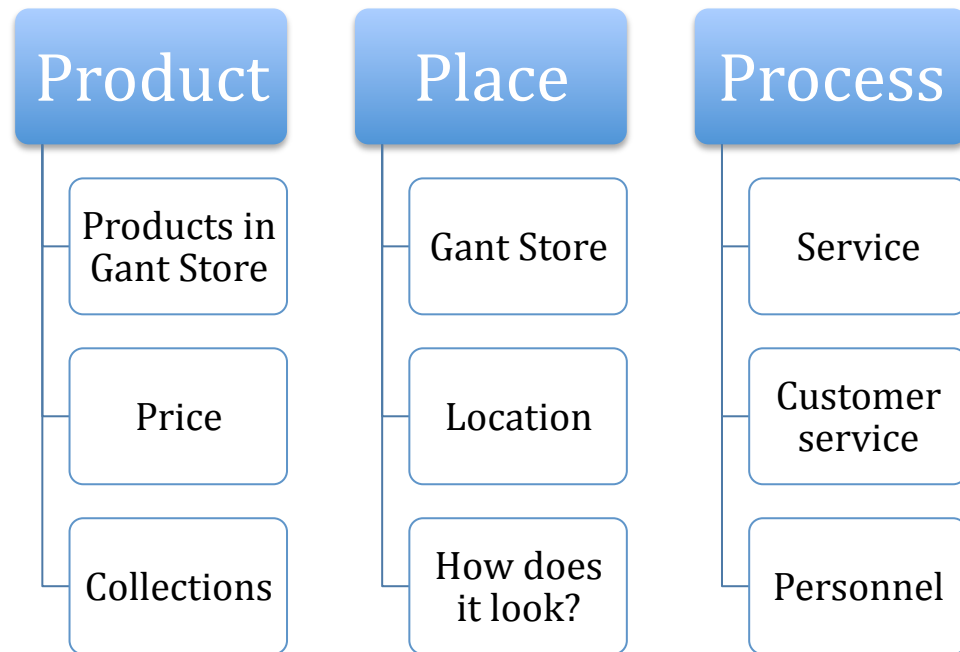


Figure 6.2 The structure of how theory meets empirical study case diagram

Product, place and process are one of the three of the 7 PHs in this diagram. All of these 3 PHs connects to the questionnaire when asking customer 's opinion about Gants products, stores and process in customer.

7. EMPIRICAL PART

7.1 Introduction the Case Company- Gant Store

Even though Gant are owned by the Swedish, their involvement in the profile is very low. Gant is considered and promoted as an American brand with a taste of European elegance.

GANT is a global premium lifestyle brand for Men and Women. Brand also incorporates boys, girls and baby collections as well as Time, Fragrance, Footwear, Home, Eyewear and Underwear licenses under the GANT brand name.

Originating from the traditions and lifestyles of America's East Coast, Gant is a truly international lifestyle brand.

The Gant collections are sold in over 300 Gant stores as well as in over 4,000 selected retailers in over 70 countries.

Gant stores constitute one of the most important components in the perception of the Gant lifestyle. Consequently Gant has created its own interior design concept. The idea behind the concept is that each Gant Store should convey a genuine experience of the Gant lifestyle to customers.

All Gant Stores are operated with the Gant brand and sell exclusively Gant lifestyle products. Gant Stores are decorated according to the company's overall store concept and guidelines, adapted to local conditions. Written approval from Gant and compliance with the terms set out in the approval are required to open and operate a Gant Store.

Today Gant is distributed worldwide in 55 countries, through 181 stores as well as a number of selected premium retailers. (www.gant.com)

7.2 Research Methodology

The aim of this thesis was to gather the opinion of Gant Store's customers on the customer service, products, prices etc.

The customer satisfaction research was implemented by using quantitative research. The questionnaires were handed out to the customers in the stores.

The questionnaire included a mixture of structured and open questions. This enabled the customer to write their open opinions and improvement suggestions down.

The survey aimed to find out customers' general opinion about the company.

7.3 Research process

Customer satisfaction measurements

A customer satisfaction measurement (CSM) program should not be just one of the programs within a firm. It should flow from and be taken into account every aspect of the corporate culture. The voice of the customer must reach each unit and each corner of the firm. Only when the CSM program is the process and continually changing, evolving and giving new customer input into the firm it will of real benefit. (Neumann&Giel customer satisfaction measurement and management1995, 15)

CSM is not just about numbers and quantities data. These are important too, but it is important to bring out the voice of the customer. Also, issues like complaint handling and involving customers in decision-making processes are necessary. Without all necessary elements, CSM data remains only numbers and, therefore, does not give real value to the company. (Neumann&Giel, customer satisfaction measurement and management1995,15)

Defining the problem is the most important step in marketing research, since only when the problem has been clearly and accurately identified can a research project be conducted properly and gives useful data as result.

Defining the problem determines the entire project. Regardless of how well a research plan is designed and carried out, if the problem is not correctly identified, the findings could be misleading. (Malhotra & Birks, marketing research 2003, 30)

7.4 Questionnaire design

There are three aspects to be considered before designing a questionnaire; questions, layout and the rating scale. (Hill, 1999,52)

The questionnaire has been designed to support theories and thus making it more useful and accurate. The questionnaire includes three types of questions; background information questions on customers satisfaction and open questions.

7.5 Sampling strategy

A sample is a subset of the population that should represent the entire group. Sampling is simply stated as selecting a portion of the population, in your research area, which will be a representation of the whole population. The strategy is the plan you set forth to be sure that the sample you use in your research study represents the population from which you drew your sample (<http://www.natco1.org/research/files/SamplingStrategies.pdf>)

7.6 Validity and reliability

Validity means that customer satisfaction research measures just those factors that are connected to the satisfaction, which is wanted to measure with the research. Validity is influenced mainly by form of research questions, alternatives that are chosen to the questions (e.g. scales) and the question positioning in the survey. (Rope & Pöllänen, Asiakastyytyväisyysjohtaminen 1998, 83)

“Reliability refers to the stability of the measure.” (Ghauri & Gronhaug, Research methods in business studies, a practical guide 2002, 68). This basically means that, when the customer satisfaction research is repeated, the results are practically similar to the previously implemented research. Unless, of course, changes have happened in customer satisfaction. The factors that debilitate the reliability are the size of the random sample, a great number non-replies, unclear formation of questions and wrong timing of the implementation of the research. (Rope & Pöllänen, Asiakastyytyväisyysjohtaminen 1998, 83)

Validity

Because there were no possibility to answer the questionnaire anonymously there might be validity problems with the results. Most of the answers were given by loyal customers and they might have been answering subjectively. This is because of they might have wanted to please the staff.

Reliability

This was the first customer satisfaction survey made in the Gant Stores in Espoo and Helsinki, so there is no previous example at how satisfied

customers have been before. This was a good start and I find it very important to continue this measurement.

The research was conducted in March and the survey was handed out to customers for two week. I find that the time-period was long enough to collect reliable results. The number of returned questionnaires between Gant Stores was relatively high but a low answering percent in Gant Store Kämp Gallery might have some effect on the results.

The questionnaire scale was also confusing for some customers and there were some misunderstanding on how to fill the sheet.

Most of the answers belong to main customer group (31-51-year old) and also most of them were members of Gant Club. This fact clarifies that the answers are from the right customer group and can be consider as reliable.

8. THE DATA ANALYSIS

The research that was conducted in March 2008 and was answered by the customers of Gant Store in Helsinki Area. The questionnaire were handed out in Gant Store Sello, Espoo, Gant Sore Kamppi and Gant Store Kämp Gallery. 72 customers answered the survey. The survey is attached at end of the thesis.

8.1 The number of Respondents in the Stores

Customer satisfaction survey was handed out to the customers of the Gant Store. The division between the respondents between the stores was not very equal. Most of the respondents were the customers of Kamppi and Sello, only 14 percent of the answers were from Kämp Gallery.

Reasons for this gap might be that Kamppi and Sello are in the cross-roads of the public transport and the customer flow is higher. The other reason also might be lack of interest in handing out the survey

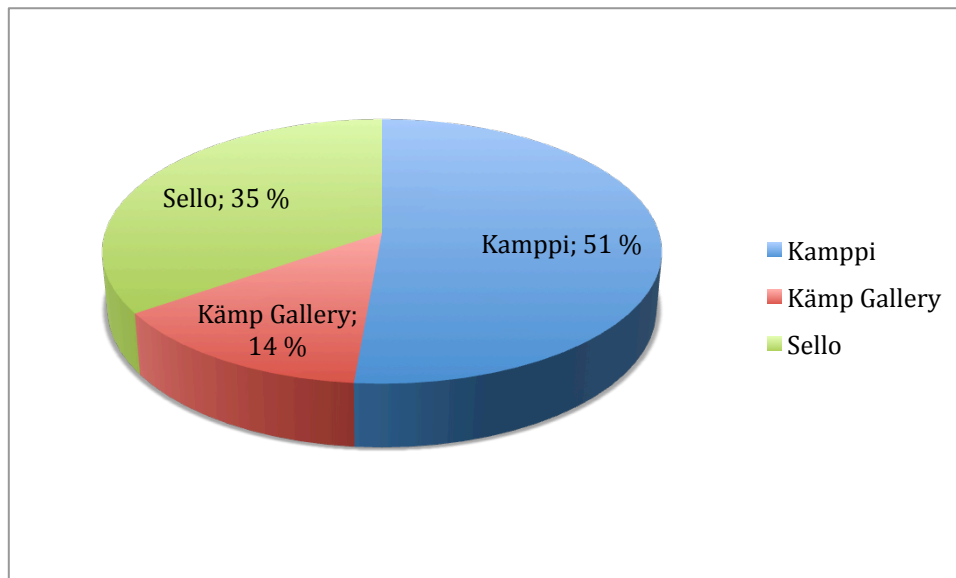


Figure 1: The Number of Respondents in the Stores

8.2 The Length of the Customership

The first Gant Store opened doors in Kämp Gallery Helsinki in 2001. It is interesting to see that the answered customers are rather new customers. Most of the responds came from the customers who have been customers for one to two years.

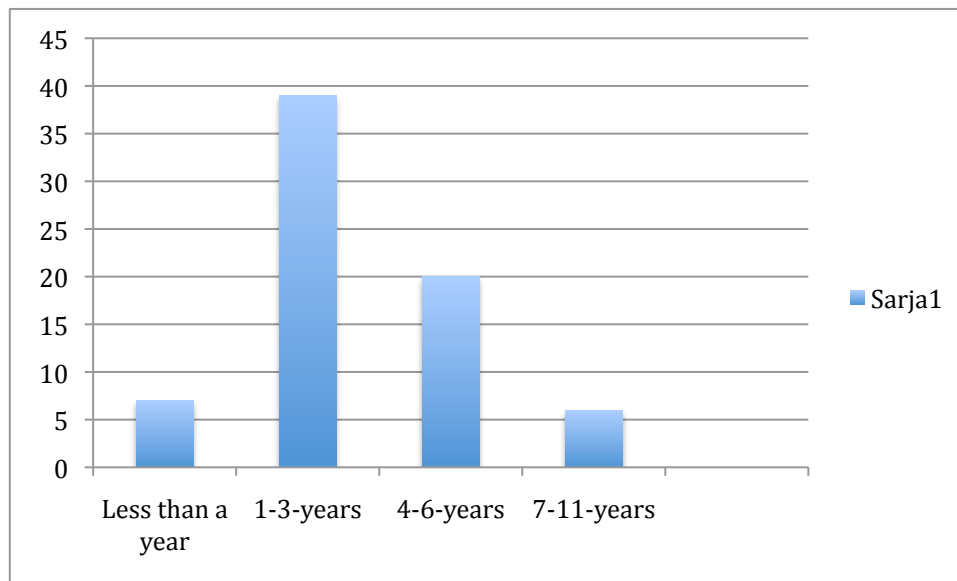


Figure 2: The Length of the Customership

8.3 The Age of the Respondents

The question about age was asked to understand the customer. As it was expected the largest age groups were 31-40 and 41-50.

It is very important to know this when purchasing collections. This age group can afford to buy more expensive goods and respects good quality.

Also young people, 20-30- year olds, are an important customer group. They are very potential customers. Young people spend money on themselves and are interested in the fashion.

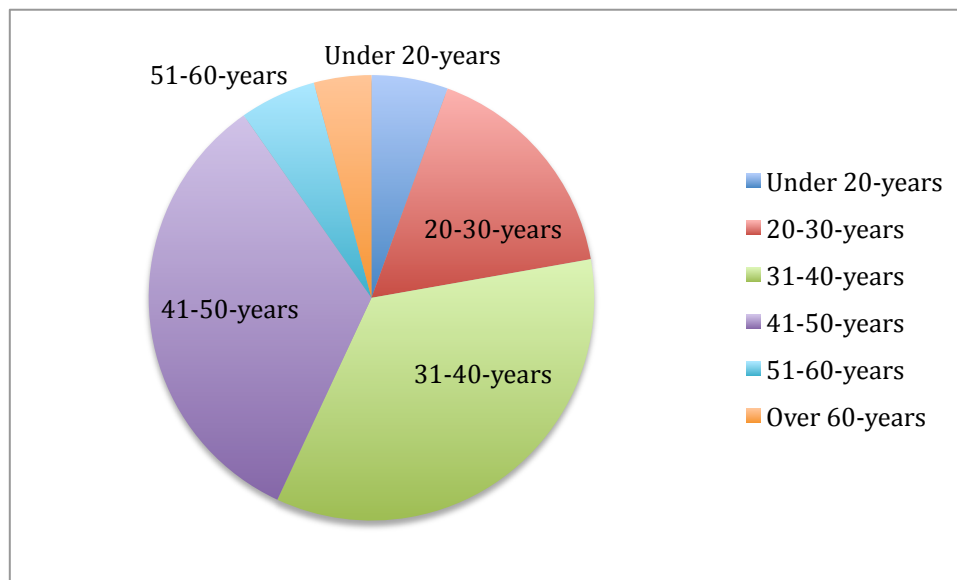


Figure 3: The Age of the Respondents

8.4 The Stores where the Customers purchase Goods

In figure can be observed that Kamppi has the biggest customer flow. It is interesting to see that Sello and Kämp Gallery have almost the same. Other 10 per cent where customers visit are Gant stores abroad, at Stockmann, Kekäle, Pukumies and Moda.

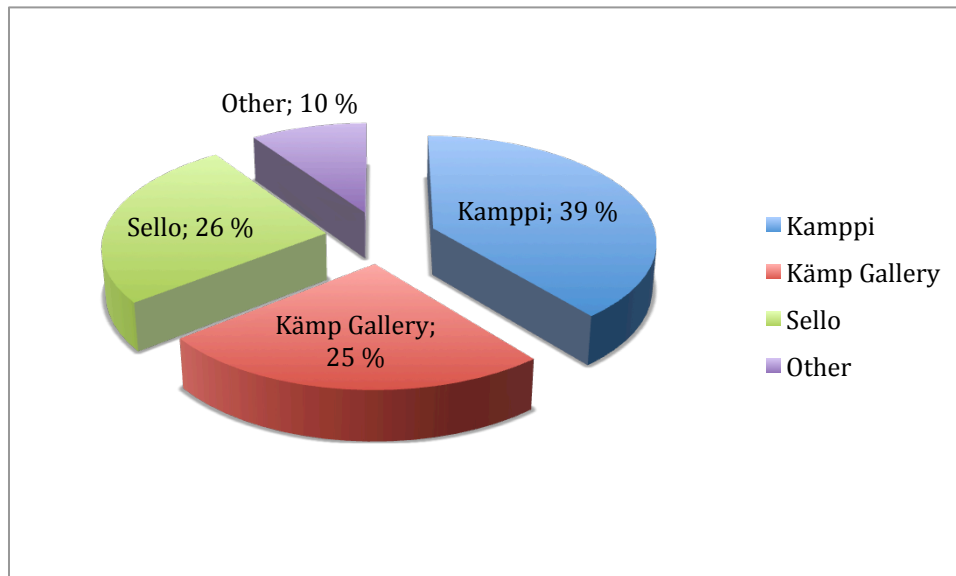


Figure 4: The Stores where the Customers purchase Goods

8.5 Member of the Gant Club

Customers were asked if they are members of the Gant Store. The club Idea for this club is to collect bonuses for half a year and then spend those in the next half-a-year. Most of the answers were already members, so they have knowledge of the brand and expectations on what it should be. More than half of the respondents belong to the club, so they are old customers, and aware of the style in advance.

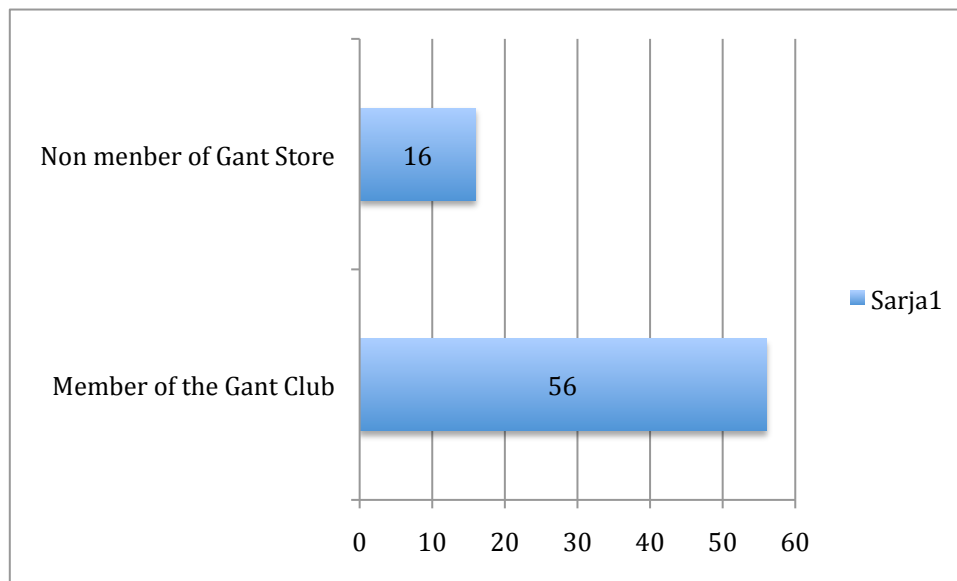


Figure 5: Member of the Gant Club

The second section of the questionnaire was about customer satisfaction. There were four attributes to be evaluated; Store, products, customer service and opening hours. The scale was from 1 excellent to 5 poor. The results of each question are presented graphically.

Gant Store

8.6 The Style of the Store

Most of the respondents found stores attractive and stylish. The stores have been built according the Gant concept, but maintaining the style is sometimes challenging.

A little bit of a confrontation can be observed, so all the respondents are not fully satisfied with the appearance of the stores.

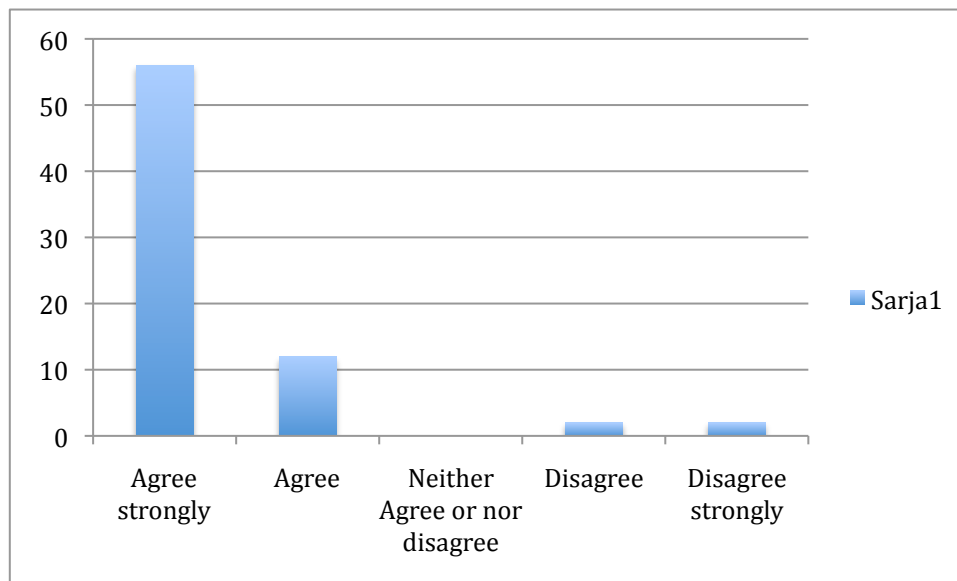


Figure 6: The Style of the Store

8.7 Image

Gant is a lifestyle brand and customers should feel the American East Coast spirit at the stores. According to the study, Gant Stores in the metropolitan area have managed quite well. A slight difference of opinion also exists, but it just helps to remember that improvement must be done all the time.

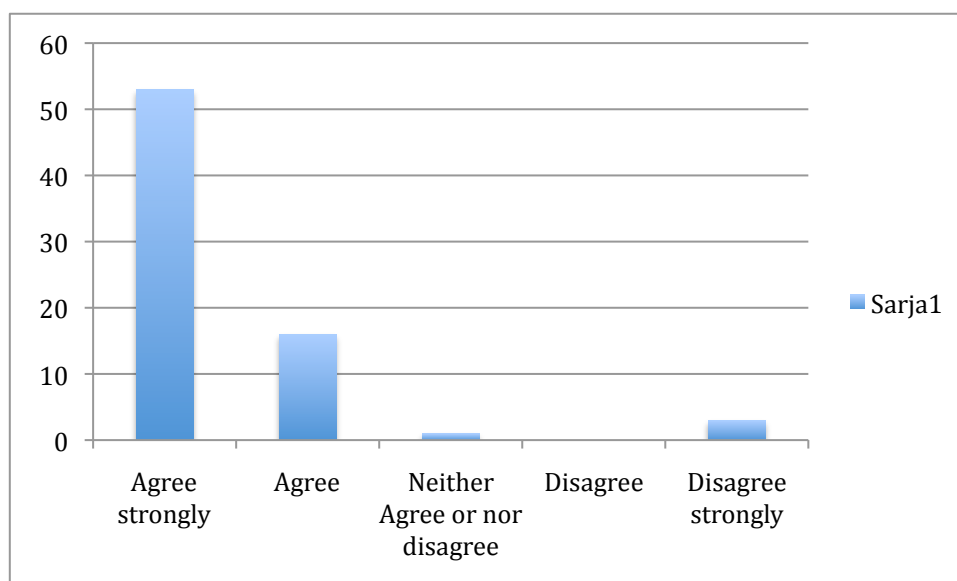


Figure 7: Image

8.8 Cleanliness

Cleanliness important to everyone and it is appropriate that the store is tidy and clean. Clothing dust spreads and regular cleaning is mandatory. According to the survey respondents find stores clean and tidy.

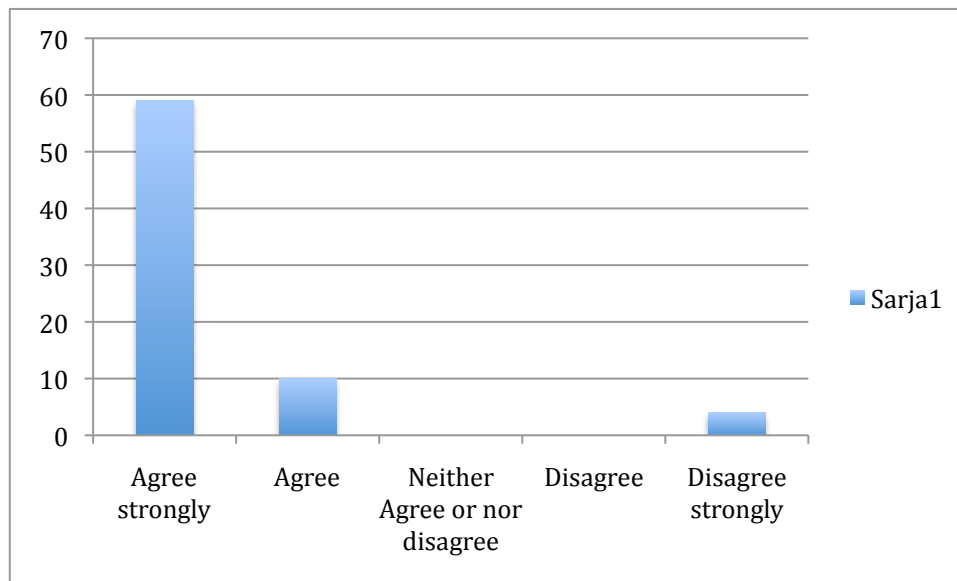


Figure 8: The Cleanness of the Store

8.9 Attractiveness of the Windows

Windows are an extremely important way to wake customer's interest in entering the store. According to the results window decorations have been quite successful. Some disagreements were also found, so improvements must be made all the time. Maybe professional stylish might be a good idea.

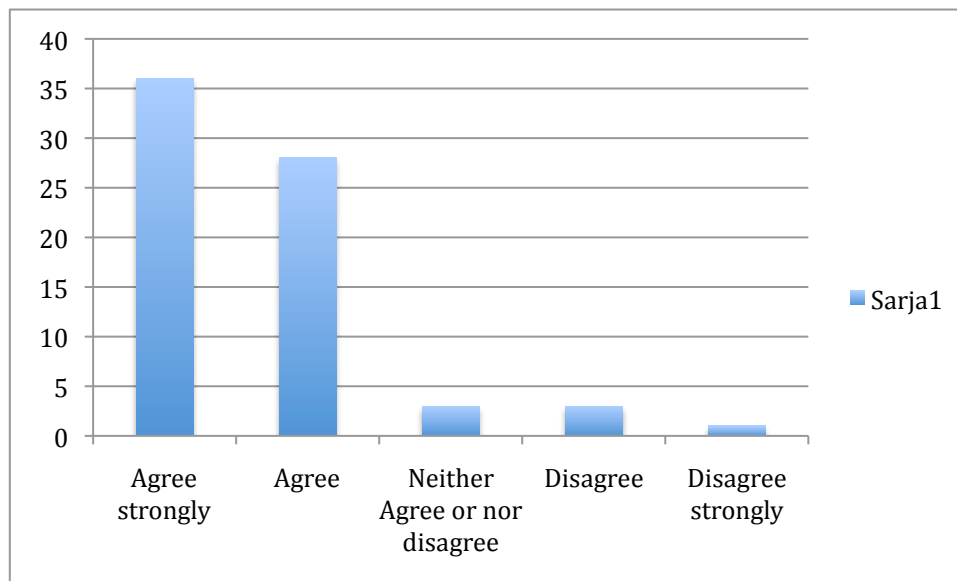


Figure 9: Attractiveness of the Windows

8.10 Location of the Stores

Stores are located in shopping centers, which are in the middle of the city of Helsinki or in the middle of the busy business locations like Sello is. There are excellent transportation connections to all of the places. The results of the questionnaire also show that the locations of the stores are good and functional.

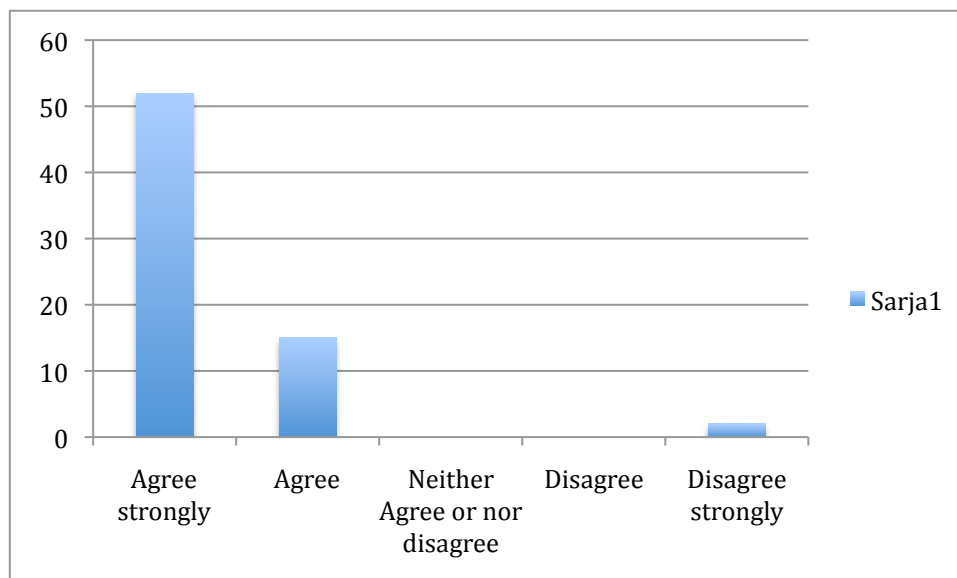


Figure 10: Stores location

Products

8.11 Price versus quality

Customers have high expectations of the products. The price is quite high, so the quality should be good. Gant is known for high quality products and it should fulfill this image.

As shown in to the diagram, the customers are quite happy with the price-quality ratio. There is also some dissatisfaction to be noted, which might be the influence of globalization. Production is moved around the world, especially to Asia and lower income countries quality might suffer because of this.

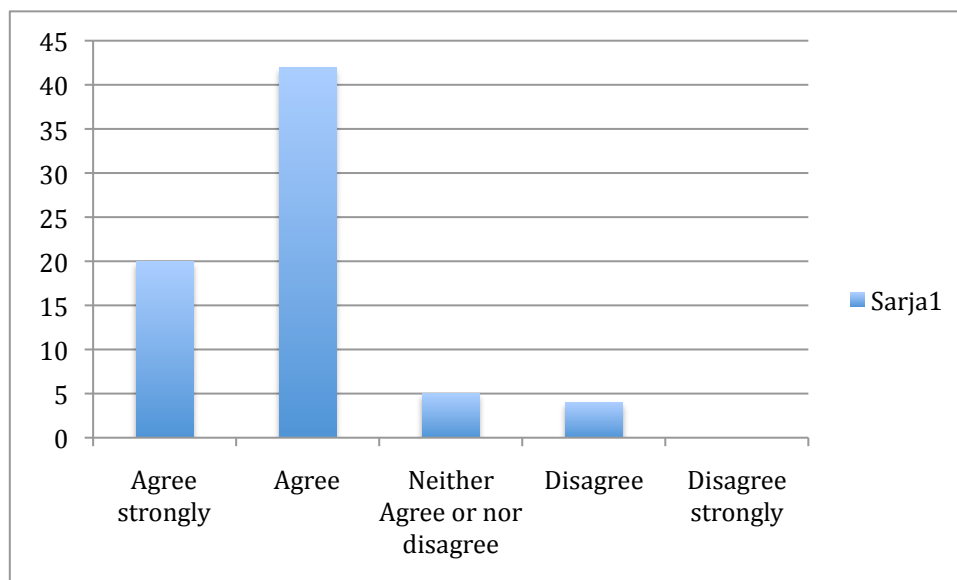


Figure 11: Price-versus quality

8.12 Collections trendiness

According to the results, most of the respondents agree strongly that the collection is trendy. This is quite interesting, because Gant's goal is to be classic and not so trendy. However some of the answers were almost opposite and answerers thought that trendiness was far away.

A good question is that why the people who don't agree with trendiness are buying Gant? Maybe for these people a classic style is the most important feature and it is a positive thing that they do not find the collection trendy.

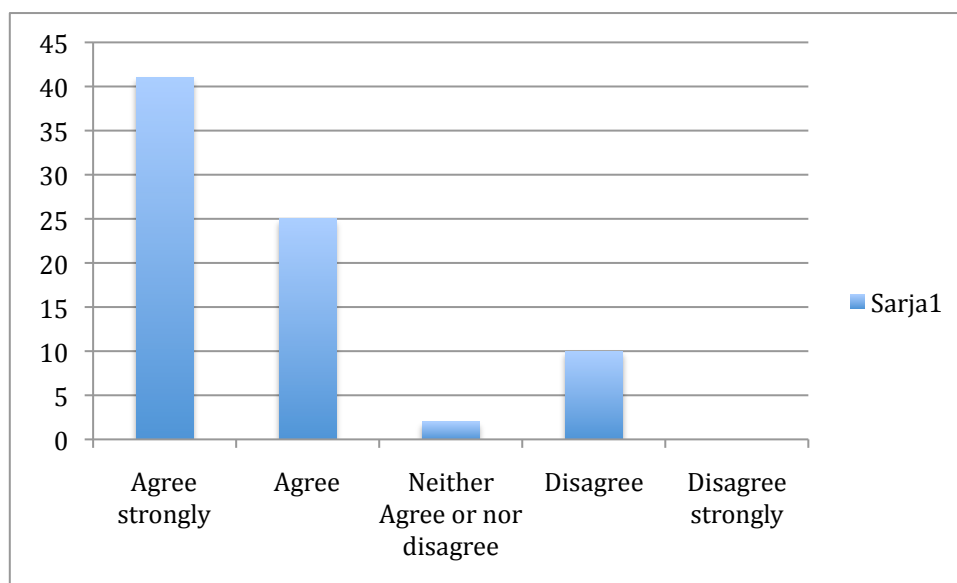


Figure 12: Collections trendiness

8.13 Collections diversity

Gant's collection is wide and it includes clothing, shoes, accessories, sunglasses, home textiles, baby collection, perfumes etc. The problem with the diversity is

usually the lack of the room to have all the products available. Especially in the Gant Store Sello this problem is worth mentioning.

In the results, answers are quite divided. The reason for this is the questionnaire was filled out in three different stores and my suggestion is that the biggest problem is especially in Sello. Customers would like to have more options to choose from.

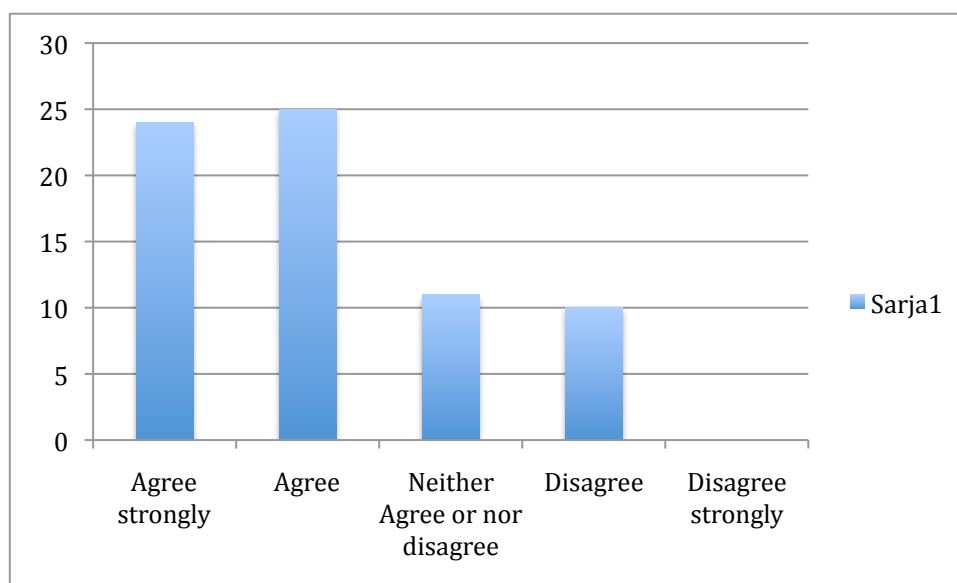


Figure 13: Collections Diversity

8.14 Availability of the products

Availability of the products is amazingly good. Diagram shows that the respondents are mostly satisfied and customers are finding the goods that they are looking for. Some disagreement is also found. Gant Catalogue could be one reason for this, as clothes which are found from there are maybe not available in the stores.

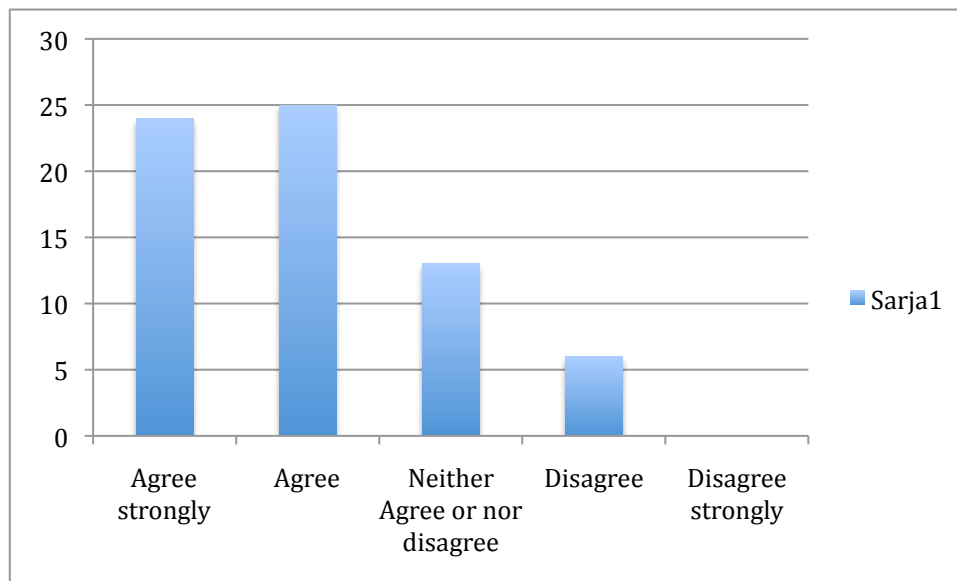


Figure 14: Availability of the Products

Gant is considered an American brand and people also think that the sizes are big. Collection is designed in Sweden and sizes are quite normal. As a diagram shows most customer are satisfied with the sizes. Some disagreement is also to be found and my suggestion for this lack of agreement is the lack of big sizes both in women 'sand men's collections. Buyers also buy too many medium sizes and because of our welfare, people also need a bit bigger clothing.

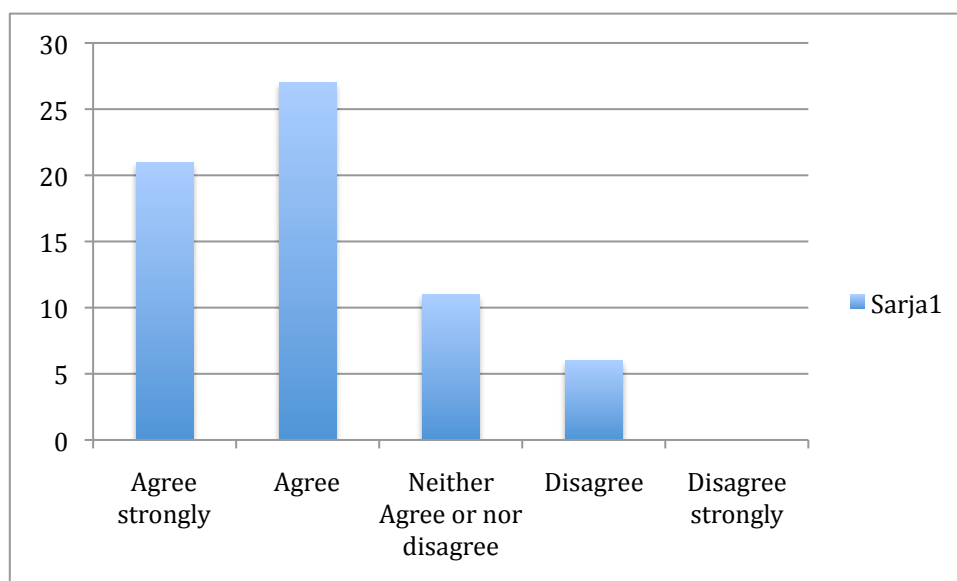


Figure 15: Availability of Sizes

8.15 Service

Service expertise is very important for business to be successful. Products can be bought also elsewhere, but if the customer feels important and will get high quality customer service, he will also return to the store.

The study result is brilliant. Expertise is very good. A slight improvement must be made, but these need to be made in all areas, so that store will keep up with the competition.

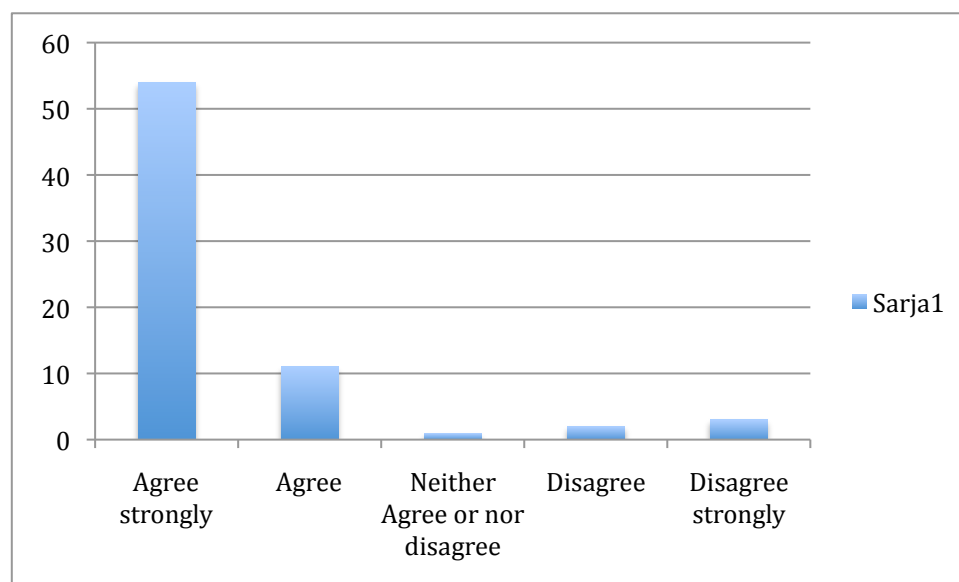


Figure 16: Service expertise

8.16 Kindness of Service

Particularly in the metropolitan area the service is sometimes unfriendly, and sales persons do not pay attention to the customers. Diagram shows that the expertise of the service is good and the customers feel like they are welcomed to the store.

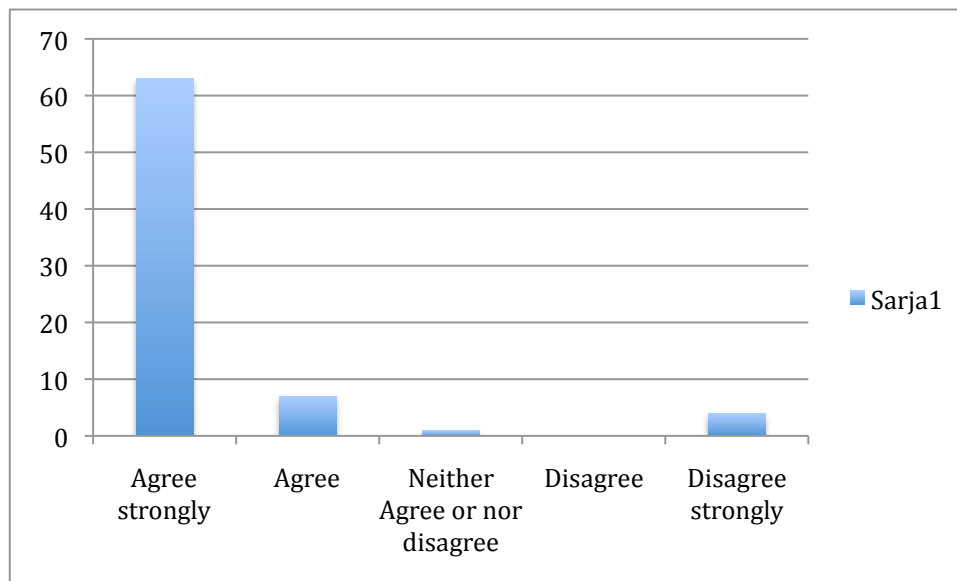


Figure 17: Kindness of Service

8.17 Service expectations are full-filled

The customer who receives poor service does not ever go back to the store where it happened. This is the reason why customer service must be perfect all the time and the seller may not ever have a bad day.

Fortunately most of the answerers find that they have received good customer service and their service expectations are fulfilled.

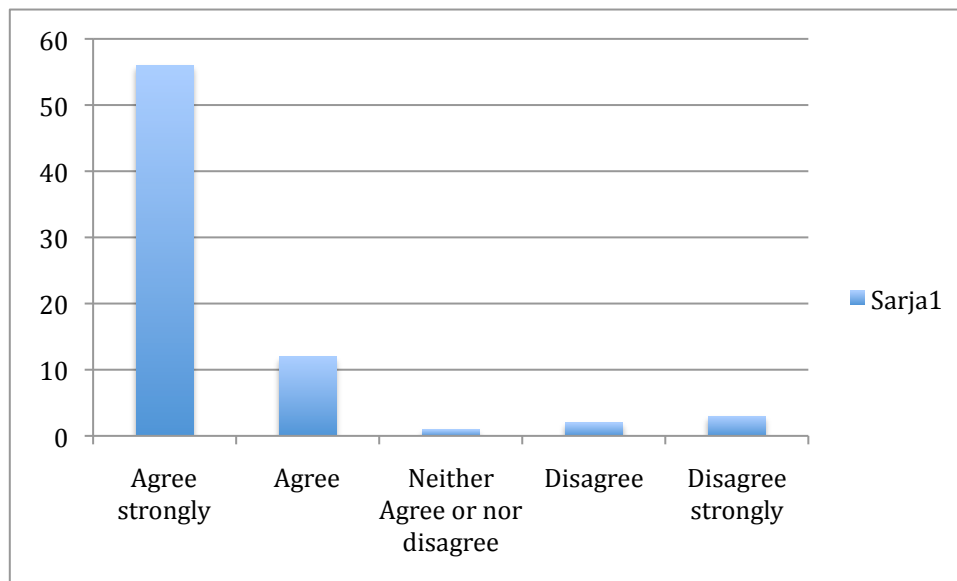


Figure 18: Service expectations are full-filled

8.18 Open-Hours

Stores are open in the shopping destinations in according to the rules by the shopping center. Some of the respondents held the view that the stores would not have to be open until 21.00. Most of the respondents were indeed very satisfied with the changes in open hours.

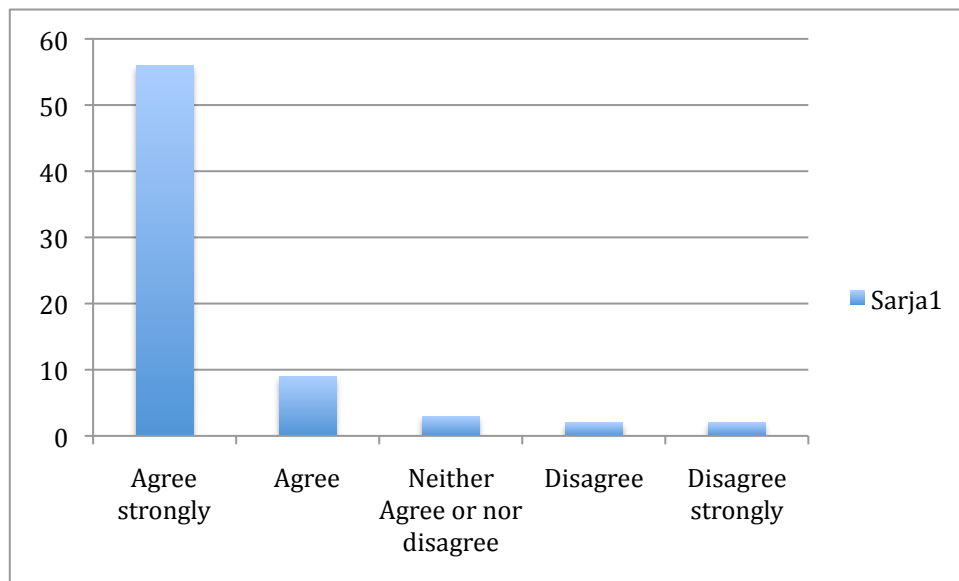


Figure 19: The Open-hours of the Stores

At the end of the questionnaire respondents had an opportunity to comment freely and the following comments and suggestions were given:

- Nice to go shopping here (Sello)
- Fitting room's carpet is torn
- A lot of light bulbs burnt
- Too dark
- Nice atmosphere, lovely to visit here
- Personal service, thank you!

9.1 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Customer satisfaction is the basis for any company to operate and make profit. Service quality creates customer satisfaction, and the customers define quality. The customer satisfaction surveys have to take place on continuous basis, and the results has to be put into practice in the company's strategies and operations.

This survey was the first customer satisfaction study made in The Gant Store in Helsinki Area. The aim of this study was to find out how the customers in the Helsinki Area see the company and what suggestions are for the improvement.

Over all the results of the customer satisfaction were very positive and from this study it is good to continue regularly.

Based on the theory about customer satisfaction, service quality and customer satisfaction studies it is clear that with basic service it is not enough to compete with the competitors. Customers would like to have personal contact with a sales person and many times in the Gant Store a customer and a seller are get to know even better and know, for example, each others names and some other personal details.

In the future, a further study for Gant Store could be carried so that all the Gant Stores around Finland would take part the study. Also the questionnaire could include questions about Gant catalogue, average amount of money a customer is willing to pay on and more specific information on what kind of clothes and products customers would like to see in the stores.

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ASIAKASTYYTYVÄISYYSKYSELY

Hyvä Asiakas,

Kartoitamme käsillä olevalla tutkimuksella GANT STORE:n asiakkaiden tyytyväisyyttä myymälöissämme. Kyselyn avulla pyrimme kartoittamaan asiakkaiden mielipiteitä palvelun- ja tuotteiden tasosta sekä mahdollisia puuteita kyseisiin seikkoihin liittyen. Kyselyyn vastaamiseen kuluu noin 5 minuuttia ja pyydämme teitä harkitsemaan kysymyksiä ennen vastausta, jotta saamme tutkimuksesta mahdollisimman hyödyllistä informaatiota liikkeittemme toiminnan parantamiseksi. Arvomme kaikkien vastanneiden kesken 100 euron lahjakortin ja ilmoitamme siitä henkilökohtaisesti.

Kiitos vastauksestanne!

katriina.mattsson@gmail.com

Nimi: _____

Osoite: _____

Puhelin: _____

E-mail: _____

1. Kuinka monta vuotta olette asioinneet Gant Storeissa?

- ☐ Alle vuoden
- ☐ 1-3 vuotta
- ☐ 4-6 vuotta
- ☐ 7-9 vuotta

2. Ikä

- ☐ alle 20- vuotta
- ☐ 20-30- vuotta
- ☐ 31-40- vuotta
- ☐ 41-50- vuotta
- ☐ 51-60- vuotta
- ☐ yli 60- vuotta

3. Missä GANT-liikkeissä asioitte pääasiallisesti (voit rastittaa myös useamman vaihtoehdon)

- ☐ GANT STORE Kamppi
- ☐ GANTSTORE Kämp Galleria
- ☐ GANTSTORE Sello
- ☐ GANT STORE Turku
- ☐ Jossain muualla

Jos valitsitte viimeisen kohdan, niin missä liikkeissä asioitte?

4. Kuulutteko GANT-klubiin?

- Kyllä
- En

Seraavaksi esitämme väitteitä, koskien GANT STORE-liikkeitä, tuotteita sekä palvelua. Ympyröikää mielestänne sopivin vaihtoehto:

1=Täysin samaa mieltä; 2=Melko samaa mieltä; 3=En osaa sanoa; 4=Hieman erimieltä;

5=Täysin erimieltä.

GANT STORE

6. Liike näyttää tyylikkäältä	1	2	3	4	5
7. Liike on brändin mukainen	1	2	3	4	5
8. Liike on siisti	1	2	3	4	5
9. Liike on mielenkiintoinen	1	2	3	4	5
10. Näyteikkunat ovat tyylikkäät	1	2	3	4	5
11. Liikkeen sijainti on hyvä	1	2	3	4	5

TUOTTEET

12. Hinta-laatu suhde on tuotteilla hyvä	1	2	3	4	5
13. Mallistot ovat trendikkäitä	1	2	3	4	5
14. Mallisto on monipuolinen	1	2	3	4	5
15. Malliston värit ovat hyvät	1	2	3	4	5
13. Tuotteiden saatavuus on hyvä	1	2	3	4	5
14. Oikeita kokoja on saatavilla hyvin	1	2	3	4	5
16. Mallisto on mielenkiintoinen	1	2	3	4	5

PALVELU

15. Myyjät ovat asiantuntevia	1	2	3	4	5
16. Myyjät ovat ystävällisiä	1	2	3	4	5
17. Myyjät ovat iloisia ja reippaita	1	2	3	4	5
18. Vastaako palvelu odotuksianne	1	2	3	4	5
19. Oletteko tyytyväisiä palveluun	1	2	3	4	5

AUKIOLOAJAT

18. Liikkeen aukioloajat ovat hyvät	1	2	3	4	5
19. Liikkeen tulisi olla auki myöhempään	1	2	3	4	5

Suosittelisitko Gant Storea ystäville?

Kyllä

En

Jos ei, niin miksi?

Lisäkommentteja ja parannusehdotuksia

Kiitos vaivannäöstänne!